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## THE SQ4R METHOD



### Survey, Question, Read, Respond, Recite, and Review

Studying works better when it means something to you, when it relates to your life. There are a number of ways to do this and I recommend you try as many as you can.

Many students find the *SQ4R System* an effective method for reading textbooks. Although it may, at first, seem more time-consuming than simply reading the text, in fact you are *reading*, *taking notes*, and *studying for exams* in a single process.

### **Survey**

This process should take no more than 5-10 minutes. Students may find it useful to simply survey a chapter in a textbook before lectures, rather than reading carefully. A quick survey will familiarize you with names, formulae, important issues, etc. that are relevant to the lecture being given.

- In surveying a chapter:
  1. Take a few minutes to consider the title and sub-titles
  2. then look at all illustrations, diagrams, graphs
  3. quickly read the summary (before or after the chapter), if there is one
  4. glance at all key words, questions for consideration, problem sets.

### **Question**

Always read with a question in mind – this will make reading a more active process, which will help with concentration and retention. You'll also find, once you start reading more actively, that it's easier to identify the "important" issues; thus, you'll end up with fewer notes to review.

- The easiest way to do this is to turn all sub-headings into questions.
  1. For example, in a first year Psychology text, a chapter on "Stress" has a sub-heading called "The benefits of talking about trauma." You might turn this sub-heading into the question: "What are the benefits of talking about trauma?" **Read**

The next step is to read the text book, but only read section-by-section, *actively* looking for the “answers” to the “questions” you’ve posed.

1. Once you’ve found your “answer,” highlight or underline it in the textbook and write a key word or an abbreviated question in the margin.

## **Respond**

Actively respond to what you are reading. There are a variety of activities you can do:

1. Jot down any questions or thoughts which arise from your reading
2. Relate what you have read to existing information (previous lectures, class discussion, knowledge from other courses or experiences)
3. Take notes about key concepts and ways of thinking, argument, etc., in your own words

## **Recite**

Before you go on to read the next section, cover up the text that you’ve just read and “answer” – out loud – the “question” that you’ve written in the margin.

1. If you can’t answer it, read the text again, cover it up, and try to answer the “question” once more.
2. Only go on to read the next section when you can successfully answer the “question” or “questions” that you’ve posed.

## **Review**

At the end of your study session, don’t just close up your book and forget what you’ve done.

- Leave yourself 15 extra minutes.
1. Take a 5 minute break.
  2. and then go back to the material that you started reading at the beginning of your study session
  3. and take 5-10 minutes to repeat the process outlined under “recite.”